

**Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of the United States International Education Week**

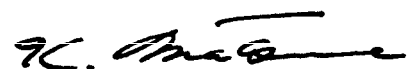
(14-18 November 2005)

I am delighted to join United States Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in marking this year's International Education Week, a week to celebrate the power of learning. International Education Week is your invitation to discover the world.

Education is at the heart of UNESCO's concerns. It builds awareness of the wider world, and gives us the opportunity to understand each other better. Through the Educational for All movement, which UNESCO leads, we are particularly concerned to give everyone the chance to learn and to develop his or her potential. Literacy - using reading and writing in daily life - is a key to learning, and this is why UNESCO has launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). As First Lady Laura Bush wrote in her introduction to the LIFE programme, "Literacy is a significant first step toward building a better life." The thirty-four countries across the world that will participate in the Initiative account for 85 percent of the estimated 771 million persons aged 15 and over who are still waiting to take that first step, and UNESCO is grateful for U.S. cooperation in making it happen.

This is a week when we pay special attention to learning about other countries, other languages and other ways of life. In today's world, the need to build relationships of trust and mutual understanding across cultural and national barriers is more urgent than ever. Together with the United States, UNESCO promotes international exchanges because they provide a unique way to deepen our knowledge of one another through direct contact with other cultures. Those who study abroad forge special links and friendships that become integral parts of their lives.

I hope that this International Education Week will open new doors of discovery for students and communities, increasing communication and understanding among people of all nations.



Koïchiro Matsuura